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AUTHOR Martin, Ian; Shaw, Mae
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ABSTRACT

An analysis of community development in British state policy during the post-war period identifies these four discourses of citizenship implicit within successive phases of policy development: social democracy and the problem of the inactive citizen; structuralist critique and the problem of citizen action; marketization and the problem of citizen as customer; and democratic renewal and the challenge of active citizenship. Such changes in policy actively construct and reconstruct the discourses by means of which it is possible to talk about citizenship and what learning citizenship means, a process more sharply defined in the policy and literature of community development than adult education and lifelong learning. Lifelong learning must be seen as an agent that catalyzes through learning the link between active citizenship and social inclusion, an active political process often more clearly exposed in community development than in the discourse of lifelong learning. New Labor has been promoting democratic renewal. An issue is whether politicians and policymakers grasp the challenge of democratic renewal as a political process in which people in communities are regarded as critical allies and creative actors in the building of a new and inclusive kind of democracy. Community workers and adult educators can foster and sustain such an alliance and become key agents in catalyzing the vital connections among active citizenship, lifelong learning, and social inclusion. (Contains 41 references.) (YLB)

**Wider Benefits of Learning:
Understanding and Monitoring the Consequences of Adult Learning**

Learning Citizenship: Lessons from the History of Community Development

ESREA 2001 Research Conference

**Ian Martin and Mae Shaw
University of Edinburgh
Scotland, UK**

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'Wider Benefits of Learning: Understanding and Monitoring the Consequences of Adult Learning'

Universidade Lusófona, Lisbon, Portugal

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Learning citizenship: lessons from the history of community development*

**Ian Martin
Mae Shaw
University of Edinburgh
Scotland, UK**

Introduction: Community development and the construction of citizenship

This paper is based on an analysis of community development in British state policy during the post-war period. It identifies four discourses of citizenship which are implicit within successive phases of policy development: *social democracy and the problem of the inactive citizen; the structuralist critique and the problem of citizen action; marketisation and the problem of citizen as customer; democratic renewal and the challenge of active citizenship*

What we wish to suggest from this analysis is that such changes in policy actively construct and reconstruct the discourses by means of which it is possible to talk about 'citizenship' as well as what 'learning citizenship' might mean. In the process, certain kinds of argument (and action) are ruled in and others are ruled out. We suggest that, in some respects, this process is much more sharply defined in the policy and literature of community development than adult education and lifelong learning. What can we learn from community development in this respect? This is a particularly important question to address at a time when there is widespread interest throughout Europe in linking the policy priorities of active citizenship, lifelong learning and social inclusion. In our view, this is not a simple linear relationship. The challenge is to see lifelong learning as an agent which catalyses *through learning* the link between active citizenship and social inclusion. This is an active political process which is often more clearly exposed in community development than in the sanitised - and often somewhat rhetorical - discourse of lifelong learning.

In Britain New Labour has been concerned to promote 'democratic renewal' as one of its big ideas through a variety of new policy initiatives aimed at devolution of decision-making and community involvement. This could be viewed by some as a deepening of democracy - or 'democratising democracy' in Anthony Giddens' terms; by others, with more scepticism, as a move from formally constituted Local Authority to informally concocted local authority (Patrick, 1999). The question therefore arises as to whether popular participatory initiatives such as these offer real possibilities for a renewal of democracy or whether more governance could, in fact, mean *less* democracy. At a time when community development seems to be so directly tied to the apron strings of the state - indeed, increasingly incorporated within state policy - it is all the more important to stand back and take stock.

* This presentation is based on a paper which was published in a special issue of the *Community Development Journal* (Vol 35 No 4 in October 2000, 401-413) on the theme 'Community development: globalization from below'.

Social democracy: the problem of the inactive citizen

The central purpose of community development according to the 1968 Gulbenkian Report, often regarded as a seminal statement in this respect, was to provide a means by which diverse demands could be mediated and managed 'through the application of expertise, promoting universalist social citizenship' (Clark, 1996). The report was explicit in its advocacy of education for participative democracy in a pluralist society. Essentially, the problem was defined in two ways: there was something deficient in individuals or groups (social pathology) or in the ways institutions and services responded to their needs (institutional deficiency). Either way, certain people were disabled as citizens in relation to the exercise of their democratic rights and/or responsibilities. The solution was two-fold: first, to integrate deficit/disaffected individuals and groups into the mainstream; second, to make providers of services more sensitive to their needs, thus bridging the gap between 'distant and anonymous authority' (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1968) and those on the receiving end of services. In short, community development sought, in Seymour Martin Lipsett's celebrated phrase, to 'tidy up the ragged edges of the good society'.

Consequently, as the management of social democracy became both more problematic and critical in the growing fiscal crisis of the state in the 1970s, community workers were well placed not only to mediate diverse and competing demands but also to regulate and, where necessary, limit them. There is much reference in the literature of the time to 'taking the load off the statutory services' by voluntary activity and mutual self-help. But, critically for our argument, community development also operated ideologically as a conduit for the transmission and affirmation of particular attitudes and values (see Mayo, 1975). Gulbenkian, for instance, referring to the 'disadvantaged', explicitly advocated the need to 'modify behaviour in the direction of cultural norms'. Community development initiatives would transform the deficient and passive client into the active citizen.

David Thomas clarifies the construction of citizenship implicit in this model in two ways. First, community development is a distributive process, concerned with the allocation of resources and power to citizens within a pluralist framework. Second, it is a developmental process which articulates both 'franchisal' and 'social' dimensions of citizenship. Franchisal development refers to 'enhancing political responsibility', understood principally in terms of exercising both the right and obligation to vote. In this sense, citizenship is conceived in a formally ascribed and institutionalised way. Social development, on the other hand, extends the possibilities to a more active and participative construction of citizenship through 'the promotion and maintenance of communal coherence - the repair of social networks, the awakening of consciousness and responsibility for others and the creation of roles and functions that provide individual significance and social service' (Thomas, 1983).

This formulation signals a fundamental distinction between *citizenship as a formally ascribed political status* (the liberal tradition) and *citizenship as a collectively asserted social practice* (the civic republican tradition) (see Lister, 1998). It does not, however, adequately acknowledge the wider political and economic context within which citizenship is constructed. It assumes too much 'agency', ie the capacity of the subject to act autonomously. Consequently, as Jackson (1995) notes, community development may add a 'confusing gloss' to a process which is 'as much concerned with controlling and determining the direction of change in communities facing crisis as with enabling people to take greater control of their lives'.

What this does is to draw attention to both the ambivalent nature of state policy and the ambivalent positioning of the community worker within it. Community development can thus be argued to take place within the creative space between the intentions and outcomes of policy. Above all, what the social democratic model highlights is the significance of the essentially educational role of the worker. This, in our view, remains particularly relevant to the contemporary task of reconstructing citizenship - not least because it provides us with the settings in which to engage with people in communities around *their* interests. In this respect, it is important to emphasise that local contexts continue to allow for the possibility of relating micro experience to macro explanations despite the intrinsic limitations of localism and the increasing dangers of incorporation. They also provide the public space of politics (Phillips,

1994; Baumann, 1999) in which different groups can come together to air their differences and build solidarity around common interests.

The structuralist critique: the problem of citizen action

The welfare settlement of the early post-war years was premised on the possibility of successfully managing the inherent contradictions between the interests of capital and labour. Indeed, this has been the essence of the pragmatic compromise at the heart of social democracy. Community development policies, therefore, had a strategic role to play in delivering the benefits of 'welfare capitalism' to working people. However, by the 1970s the emergent critique of what Stuart Hall (1989) subsequently characterised as the 'authoritarian collectivism' of the welfare state had begun to suggest not only that it was failing to meet need but also that it was, in fact, part of the problem.

The 'rediscovery of poverty', dating from the late 1950s and early 1960s, may have been an affront to the 'affluent society', but it could be explained away - for the time being, at any rate - in terms of isolated 'pockets of deprivation' which called for special measures of positive discrimination: 'It was possible to conceive of a society with no losers, if only the 'disadvantaged' could be given assistance in making their case' (Taylor, 1995). Thus, despite the first signs of a radical critique, there remained - by and large - a basic confidence in the structure and efficacy of state welfare. The real limitations of the social democratic welfare state were to crystallise as wider processes of economic change began to threaten the political consensus which had remained more or less intact since the war.

The history of the Community Development Project (CDP) typified the ways in which community development came to be incorporated into the management of the wider social welfare system. In fact, it has been argued that the project was established precisely to find new approaches to the emergent crisis in social democracy and the perceived threat of disaffection, dissent and, (increasingly racial) conflict. In reality, the CDP embodied the growing tensions inherent in managing the contradictions of state welfare in a period of economic decline and rapid social change (Loney, 1983). On the other hand, with the progressive breakdown of the post-war consensus there came a new willingness to question old patterns of deference and to challenge - even to take direct action against - duly constituted authority.

It was in this somewhat volatile context that space was seized to develop a structuralist and explicitly Marxist/socialist analysis of the crisis and to articulate community development's subversive potential to be both 'in and against' the state (LEWRG, 1980). This analysis exposed the fundamental contradictions of state-sponsored community development, particularly the belief that local solutions could be found to structural problems (Corkey and Craig, 1978). Deprivation and poverty were seen to be structurally created and sustained. They were neither an unintended outcome of policy nor a function of social pathology or institutional deficiency, but rather a direct consequence of the operations of international capital and the state's role in securing its interests. Furthermore, far from redistributing power, the 'community solution' was part of the hegemonic apparatus of the state aimed at organising consent and managing dissent. This 'counter-insurgency' strategy was neatly encapsulated in the title of one of the best known CDP publications *Gilding the Ghetto* (CDP, 1977). Put this way, community development was more about regulating the poor than combating poverty (eg see Marris and Rein, 1967). It existed, in effect, to promote and legitimate the interests of the state by 'depoliticising issues and ... reducing the possibilities of tackling them in any serious way' (Shaw, 1997).

Several points need to be made about this analysis in order to take our argument forward. First, in the era of globalisation, the structuralist critique of welfare capitalism, particularly in terms of its explanatory force and the coherence of its analysis, remains as convincing as ever (see Craig, 1989; 1998). So too is the warning of the medicinal properties of the rhetoric of participation and the rights of citizenship in the absence of greater economic and social equality. Second, its redefinition of 'social problems' as the product of unequal socio-economic relations transforms them from pathological 'traits' or merely technical difficulties into urgent political issues. Third, this analysis significantly extends our understanding of the ambivalence of the state -

particularly its role in defining and managing the kind of social problems which community workers set out to address. Fourth, the problematisation of the notion of 'community' itself opens it up as a legitimate site of struggle - a particularly liberating insight for those whose interests have been obscured, such as women (see Wilson, 1977) or excluded, such as disabled people (see Oliver, 1990). Finally, the growing scepticism about the efficacy of community development is a salutary reminder that, as contemporaneous critiques suggested, it 'shouldn't be taken too seriously' (eg see Jackson, 1970).

With hindsight, however, we can identify some crucial limitations and deficiencies in the structuralist critique. First, it was simply too reductionist, ie based on a relatively crude and overdetermined account of the politics of class. Second, and in consequence of this, it was far too dismissive of the possibilities and problems of social democratic reform, the discourse of citizens' rights and the wider cultural politics of what subsequently came to be understood as the politics of 'identity and difference' (eg Dominelli, 1990; Green, 1992). This helps to explain our third reservation: whilst it is unarguable that this critique was both coherent and convincing, it also proved to be unhelpful (worse, debilitating) to many community workers - even those who accepted its intellectual and political force (see Cooke, 1996). That is to say, its logic was to undermine their willingness and ability to believe in the efficacy and legitimacy of their work, and they all too easily came to see themselves as the victims rather than the agents of their own marginality. In this sense, the logic of the structuralist analysis itself marginalised the force of its argument within the discourse of professional community development.

Most ironically perhaps, the weight given to socio-economic structure in this analysis ended up reducing those not defined primarily in class terms to the passive objects of policy as distinct from active subjects in politics. In this respect, Blagg and Derricourt (1982), writing of community development's 'heroic decade', warned presciently that: 'the labour movement must seek to link its programme with the aspirations of new movements of social protest if it is to become the leading force in society, or even simply to pre-empt "authoritarian populism"'. In the end, given the emphasis on what could be termed 'too much structure and not enough agency', community development was in danger of becoming trapped in dichotomous rather than dialectical thinking. It is largely due to the creativity of feminist theory (subsequently taken up in the literature on 'race' and disability) that we have been released from this intellectual and political *cul de sac* (eg hooks, 1987; Segal, 1987; Pascall, 1997).

In the end, in the discourse of class politics, community development came to be regarded as, at best, marginal and, at worst, an instrument of social control. This was tantamount to a counsel of despair for those who continued to be employed in local neighbourhoods and saw the importance and potential of educational and developmental work with people in communities. Furthermore, the force of the structuralist critique did little to enable community workers to see what was coming - and what they were in for. Most of the CDPs were closed down by 1975; four years later, in 1979, Margaret Thatcher was in power. There then followed 17 years of New Right reconstruction and 'reform' - including that of the infrastructure of local government itself - for which the structuralist critique had done little to help community workers prepare. The final irony was that, in the bleak midwinter of Thatcherism, community workers had rapidly to learn the lessons of the ambivalence of the state - and to defend much of what they had previously attacked.

Marketisation: the problem of the citizen as customer

Throughout the 1970s the political and theoretical arguments around social policy in general and community development in particular were conducted within a frame of reference in which the central role of the state was assumed. In contrast, throughout the 1980s and 1990s - the New Right trend continuing under New Labour - the British welfare state was subjected to a systematic process of institutional and ideological restructuring. Of particular significance is the way in which the anti-statism of the New Right project destabilised core assumptions about the welfare state and the role of professional community development within it. Modern community development 'without the state' has no prior reference points in practice or in theory. The new welfare order, therefore, reconfigures the terrain of community development in unique and unprecedented ways.

First, many services have been remodelled as quasi-markets in which consumers - or, better, customers - supposedly make choices among competing products. The net effect of this process of marketisation has been to make the reality of state power more diffuse and yet, at the same time, more pervasive. Thus, as Clarke (1996) notes: 'What from one angle can be viewed as the diminution of the state's role can be seen from another as the extension of state power, but through new and unfamiliar means'. The result is a system of public welfare - if that is the right word - which has become increasingly under-funded, competitive and unequal. In this respect, it is important to recognise that the market is not agnostic:

What is sold as a loosening of structure is in fact a *change* in the structure and what results is not an increase in individual freedom, but a *redistribution* of freedoms and opportunities amongst groups of individuals and the redrawing of the parameters of social choice itself. (Jonathan, 1990)

This process has had profound though contradictory implications for community work. At an economic level, community initiatives have been increasingly incorporated into the delivery of 'resource' policies, including the establishment of substantive services (Butcher, 1993). Growing concern over the rising costs of welfare have made the self-help ethic, institutionalised in the profession of community work, very attractive - yet again - to policy makers:

... community development, underpinned by such concepts as empowerment, participation and partnership, is being 'talked up' as a respectable, indeed essential process and mechanism for social integration and delivery of public services. Instead of being the sole province of a struggling and insecure occupation, community development has become one of the cornerstones of social welfare intervention strategies. (Miller and Ahmad, 1998)

This has been given new life by the 'Third Way' project - advanced theoretically by Giddens (1998) and politically by the Blair government - which advocates a central role for 'social entrepreneurship' in community regeneration with the state having merely a regulatory function. Thus, in a profound but deeply ambivalent sense, community development has been demarginalised. At what cost is, of course, another matter.

The idea of the 'enabling state' seems to be virtually embodied in professional community development with its traditional emphasis on 'encouraging the helpless to help themselves' - almost tailor-made, it seems, for the task of delivering the community to policy. Furthermore, the self-help ethic performs an ideological function by reinforcing the attack on the 'dependency culture' in ways which have actually facilitated the shifts in policy necessary to transmute 'public issues' into 'personal troubles'. In other words, community development can operate to remoralise communities into the new welfare culture. This is happening in the context of a *re-mixed* economy of welfare in which social purposes have been systematically subordinated to economic objectives, leading to a peculiar and hybrid discourse of welfare:

In this mixture one is likely to find the conflation of old professional representational systems ('client' centred), new marketised systems ('customer centred') and new managerial systems ('budget centred') in which the last is likely to exercise a constraining, if not decisive, interest the bottom line calculation (Clarke, 1996).

Social purposes may continue to dominate the professional discourse of community development practice, but economic objectives are increasingly applied to community development as policy. This is particularly significant when considering the changing relationship between community work, democracy and citizenship - as well as the crucial choices which have to be addressed in seeking to re-make the connections between them. Unless these choices are honestly confronted, community workers may find themselves the unwitting harbingers of the new welfare order - reduced to market researchers, matching supply and demand without regard to the wider political and economic context within which need is generated and resources are allocated.

On the other hand, state policy has also stimulated oppositional forms of politics, consistently demonstrating that its unintended outcomes may be as significant as its intended ones. Thus, as responsibility for welfare has shifted from the public to the private sphere, new oppositional constituencies and sites of struggle have been actively constructed by and through policy. The emergence of community care as a policy issue, for example, has had the ironic effect of redefining the personal as political. In this process, policy has generated new communities of interest whose identities are defined largely by their previous marginalisation or exclusion (Meekosha, 1993). This has, in effect, created new constituencies for community work: disabled people, mental health service users, older people and carers - all formerly defined (and individualised) as social work clients. In view of this, we would argue that if the space for progressive practice is to be regained, the role of community development itself must shift from that of turning citizens into consumers and customers to that of defining - and defending - democratic citizenship itself.

Democratic renewal: the challenge of active citizenship

Education for citizenship means above all the nurturing of a capacity and willingness to question, to probe, to ask awkward questions, to see through obfuscation and lies... the cultivation of an awareness that the quest for individual fulfilment needs to be combined with the larger demands of solidarity and concern for the public good. (Miliband, 1994)

As already noted, community development has consistently been deployed to mediate the shifting relationship between the state and civil society. This has traditionally involved the integration of those groups defined as deficient in some critical respect or 'dangerously disengaged' - activating the inactive citizen through regulated forms of participation (and presumably discouraging the over-active citizen who stretches the limits of social democracy too far). For much of the last two decades, however, the politics of policy has been based on the TINA assumption: 'There is no alternative'. Throughout this period many people in the 'first wave' democracies in particular have experienced representative democracy in terms of what has come to be known as the 'democratic deficit', ie the experience of being virtually silenced - and consequently disenfranchised - within the politics of the state. The challenge now, therefore, is to renew democracy by transforming the experience of democratic deficit into a process of democratic renewal. This is not only a social and political purpose, it is also an urgent educational task. In addition, it is what makes the current Scottish experience the focus of such widespread interest (see Crowther, Martin and Shaw, 1999). Ultimately, its success is predicated upon two distinct but related things: first, challenging those forces of social exclusion which are systematically at work in contemporary society; second, the determined construction of an active and inclusive concept of citizenship.

The global restructuring of capital urgently demands new ways of thinking about democracy and the nature of citizenship in a free society - as distinct from a 'free' market. As capital goes global, it undermines the sovereignty (at any rate, as traditionally understood) of the nation state and, simultaneously, exerts similar pressures everywhere to maximise profit and cut back on public expenditure. This, in turn, begins to reconfigure the relationship between the state and civil society in complex and often contradictory ways. On the one hand, civil society can become a surrogate state, not least through newly legitimised mechanisms of governance and participation; on the other hand, new social movements are generated (or old ones resuscitated) in response to policy change. What is distinctive about such movements and groupings is that they are not satisfied with simply being 'added on' to policy and politics as just so many equal opportunities categories. They want - indeed, demand - to contribute their specific experience in ways which challenge and extend the universalism on which so much social democratic welfare policy was originally premised. This raises the fundamental question for democracy today as to whether the principle of universalism and the reality of difference can be reconciled, moving beyond 'the increasingly monotonous postmodernist celebration of diversity to contemplate how difference can be accommodated politically [within] ... a differentiated universalism' (Lister, 1997).

The crucial point is that the politics of the state now needs to be reconstructed in ways which strengthen civil society, social capital and political life both outside and inside the state. In this respect, it is essential to recognise that the democratic state needs civil society. In a profound sense, it is in civil society that people learn to be the active citizens they become in the democratic state. Consequently, it is in the relationship between civil society and the state that the process of reconstructing citizenship and democracy must begin. This will require community workers not only to work 'in and against the state' but also (and critically) *for* the state - in the sense of helping to construct a new kind of settlement between the cultural politics of communities and the political culture of the state. In other words, to turn the rhetoric of New Labour's professed interest in democratic renewal into a reality requires that we now reappropriate the idea of the active citizen and make this the dynamic for 'doing politics differently'. This is an intellectual as well as a political challenge. As Fiona Williams (1998) argues:

We need to rethink the relationship between the individual and the structural so that we are able to challenge the all-too-easy recourse to individualist explanation which still dominates political discourses of poverty and social exclusion. Rather than simply reasserting the importance of the structural, we have to be able to confront individualism with an approach which can embrace the individual and his or her behaviour and reconnect it to the structural. We have indeed to argue that those experiencing social exclusion have a voice, but we need also to be able to conceptualise that voice.

Consequently, democratic renewal must become the means through which a diversity of voices can be conceptualised and articulated. It is a struggle to create a just and egalitarian political culture rather than simply a new set of institutional structures and administrative procedures. In order to 'democratise democracy', therefore, there is an urgent need to politicise politics. The fact that to call something 'political' is almost enough to bring it into instant disrepute is a regrettable, not to say dangerous, reflection on the state of contemporary politics. As David Held (1996) reminds us: 'the difficulties of the modern world will not be solved by surrendering politics, but only by the development and transformation of 'politics' in ways that will enable us more effectively to shape and organise human life. We do not have the option of 'no politics'.

This is in sharp contrast to Third Way politics which appears to reduce the political question of what kind of society we want to live in to a managerial one about how to run things (as they are) better. We now need to re-politicise citizenship - as a *process* in which power is something that is claimed, or demanded, through social and political action from below rather than handed down from above (Cochrane, 1996). It also clarifies the distinction between the construction of citizenship as an ascribed individual political status (as in the social democratic model of community development) and the construction of citizenship as a collectively asserted social practice - a necessary precondition of any meaningful form of democratic renewal. Such an active and expansive concept of citizenship requires a politics in which previously excluded voices are heard and respected - in other words, a radically inclusive politics. To put it another way 'without democracy there can be no politics and without a genuine inclusive politics the claims of the disempowered will not be heard' (Friedman, 1992).

Conclusion

The prospect of democratic renewal offers particular challenges to policy makers, community workers and adult educators. The actions of people in communities in pursuit of their own interests (as distinct from the objectives of policy makers or professionals) needs to be seen not only as the legitimate expression of active citizenship but also as the essence of democracy itself. This allows the educational role to be about expansion rather than closure: activating 'voice' rather than managing diversity; exposing awkward political problems rather than obscuring them. The real question is whether politicians and policy makers will grasp the challenge of democratic renewal as a political process in which people in communities are regarded as critical allies and creative actors in the building of a new and inclusive kind of democracy. Community workers and adult educators are now in a strategic position to foster

and sustain such an alliance. In the process, they can become key agents in catalysing the vital connections between active citizenship, lifelong learning and social inclusion.

Summary table

	Social democracy: the problem of the inactive citizen	Structuralist critique: the problem of citizen action	Marketisation: the problem of the citizen as customer	Democratic renewal: the challenge of active citizenship
Theoretical/ ideological perspective	pluralist	Marxist/ political economy	neo-liberal/ New Right	differentiated universalism
Priorities	managing change/ integration	contradictions of welfare capitalism/emergent conflict of interests	institutional/ hegemonic restructuring	repoliticising citizenship/ democracy
Implicit model of society	social consensus	class consciousness/ conflict	possessive individualism	solidarity in diversity
Construction of citizenship	individually ascribed political status	worker/political activist	entrepreneur/ customer	collectively asserted social practice
Definition of democracy	institutionalised participation	working class control/ emancipation	market freedom	continuous cultural and political process
Nature of problem	ignorance/apathy/ 'disadvantage'	exploitation/ alienation/false consciousness	dependency culture/ exclusion from market	inequality/ democratic deficit
Strategy/ prescription	positive discrimination/ compensatory provision	radical socio-economic change	competition/consumer choice/policing poor	progressive redistribution /solidaristic politics
Community Development Role	promoting self help/ selective remedial intervention	obfuscation/regulation OR politicisation	promoting enterprise/ brokering contract culture/surveillance	politicising policy/ activating citizenship

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